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ABSTRACT

A retention taskforce was established at Sinclair Community College (SCC) in Ohio to develop a plan to increase student retention. The 24-member taskforce, representing key areas within the college, worked for 15 months to prepare the plan. The plan was designed to be comprehensive, touching upon all points where the students interact with the institution and encompassing the whole continuum of experiences that students face throughout college. The plan's retention model contains four distinct phases: pre-enrollment, campus entry, enrollment, and post-enrollment. This five-part taskforce report explains the retention plan and how and why it was developed. Part I provides introductory material, which underscores the importance of retention efforts, and reviews the charge and lists the members of the taskforce. Part II presents a review of the literature, covering both student and institutional factors that affect retention. Part III describes the activities, events, projects and presentations conducted by the taskforce that led to the development of the retention plan. In part IV, the four-phase model of student retention and success is presented, and terms are defined. Finally, part V offers specific recommendations for increasing retention. Recommendations, including information on the office(s) that should be responsible for their implementation, a suggested timeframe, and anticipated benefits, are made for each phase of the model. An annotated bibliography of published retention strategies, results of a pilot study on student withdrawal, and a summary of suggestions made by retention focus groups are appended. A 50-item reference list concludes the document. (UCM)

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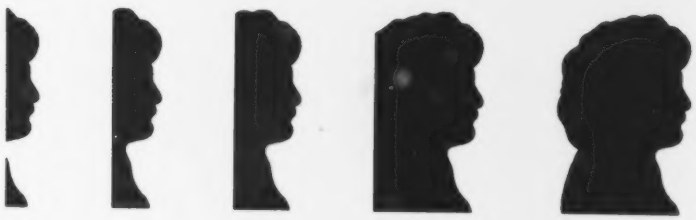
COMMITMENT TO STUDENT RETENTION:

A Plan For Success



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SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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FINAL REPORT OF THE RETENTION TASK FORCE
OCTOBER, 1986

STUDENTS ARE...

...the most important people on the campus. Without students there would be no need for the institution.

...not cold enrollment statistics but flesh and blood human beings with feelings and emotions like our own.

...not people to be tolerated so that we can do our thing. They are our thing.

...not dependent on us. Rather, we are dependent on them.

...not an interruption of our work, but the purpose of it. We are not doing them a favor by serving them. They are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to a recommendation from the Vice President for Student Services, a Retention Taskforce was established and charged with developing a plan to increase student retention at Sinclair Community College. A twenty-four member Taskforce representing key areas within the College worked together for fifteen months in preparing the plan. The focus of the plan was that it be comprehensive in nature; that is, it must touch upon all points where students interact with the institution and it must encompass the whole continuum of experiences that students face throughout college. The plan, as outlined in this report, was developed with the expectation and hope that it will be successfully implemented.

Many activities took place in the process of developing the plan. A definition of retention was established. A thorough review of the literature on retention was accomplished and many Taskforce members attended other colleges and conferences to gather information about retention activities that have been successful elsewhere. Research studies, workshops, questionnaires and other efforts were conducted within Sinclair to learn about retention issues and possible solutions at the institutional level. The process was administered in an organized, thorough, and conscientious manner to assure the best results possible.

In presenting the retention plan, a model was adapted from similar models used at other two-year institutions. The model contains four distinct phases: pre-enrollment, campus entry, enrollment, and post-enrollment. Each phase contains a series of recommendations that comprise the total plan. The recommendations provide general guidelines for implementation. The need for data support services and an ad hoc retention committee are also recommended in order for the plan to be successful. And to be successful in helping Sinclair students achieve their educational goals is the singular purpose of this effort.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all members of the Retention Taskforce for their time, interest, wisdom and involvement in this project.

To Sinclair faculty, staff, and students for their support in attending workshops and completing questionnaires.

To Charlie Nelms for his support and patience.

To Betty Klauk, Linda Hawkins, Priscilla Haag-Mutter, Carol Lazarus, and Phyllis Salter for their leadership roles in facilitating small group projects.

To Barbara Perkins for a super job of typing and editing this report.

Dennis Lettman

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is the culmination of fifteen months work conducted by the Retention Taskforce involving research, analysis, consultation, and finally, the development of a recommended plan to increase student retention at Sinclair Community College. The pages that follow will describe the need for such a plan, a review of the literature on retention, the methodology used by the Taskforce in producing the plan, a model of student retention as a framework for the plan, and a series of organized and interrelated recommendations constituting the plan itself.

A preliminary report was written and submitted by the Taskforce on March 14, 1986. The preliminary report described the necessary groundwork accomplished as a step towards the development of a retention plan. Salient elements of that report have been included with this one to assure that the reader will gain a full appreciation of how and why low retention is a problem and what can be done to increase it. A full copy of the preliminary report is available through any Vice President of Sinclair or the chairperson of the Retention Taskforce.

Why Worry About Retention?

Sinclair, like most community colleges, competes heavily with other institutions to maintain or increase its "market share" of the prospective student population. Enrollment declines and the reasons thereof have been identified and documented. Declines in sources of new students, changing community demographics and economics, changing student needs, and increasing competition in the marketplace are among the major factors contributing to shrinking enrollments. As a result, increased emphasis has been placed on developing innovative marketing and recruitment strategies that will address these changing environmental factors and impact enrollment.

To recruit students to come to this institution is one accomplishment; to retain them is quite another. According to an analysis of data provided to the American College Testing (ACT) Program by all U.S. colleges and Universities, the national attrition rate was calculated at 32%; for two year public institutions the attrition rate was 46% (Noel, L. and Levitz, R., 1983). Although there is not a currently established attrition rate for Sinclair, it is believed to be commensurate with the national rate for two-year public institutions. Additionally, enrollment data over the past several years indicate the percentage of continuing students in relationship to total enrollment at Sinclair is shrinking. Perhaps an indication of the retention/attrition rate at Sinclair can be derived from data provided by ACT for students participating in the ASSET Program over the past few quarters. The retention rate as reported here is a measure of the percent of students who enrolled one quarter and re-enrolled the following quarter. As Table 1 shows, for each quarter studied, the attrition rate (i.e. percent of students who did not re-enroll the following quarter) seems to be running below the national rate for two-year public institutions. However, many of these students have returned in subsequent quarters.

Quarters	No. Students	% Registered 1st Term	% Completed one or more courses	% Registered 1st and 2nd Term	% Not Registered 2nd Term
Fall to Winter 84-85	1341	84.3%	72.5%	69.2%	30.8%
Winter to Spring 84-85	738	82.4%	65.2%	68.0%	32.0%
Fall to Winter 85-86	2006	84.0%	73.4%	68.3%	31.7%
Winter to Spring 85-86	785	72.0%	64.5%	73.4%	25.6%

Table 1. First and Second Term Registration/Enrollment Retention Summary For ASSET Participants at Sinclair

By virtue of an open admissions policy, low cost education, convenience of location, quality of instruction and resources, etc., Sinclair, again like most urban community colleges, attracts many learners with backgrounds of scholastic failure and underpreparedness, poor self-images, and unclear goals. Likewise, changing demographics produce a changing clientele to serve. Sinclair enrolls high percentages of adult learners and parttime evening students - many of whom work fulltime. For these students, family and job demands may take priority over educational persistence. In order to deter our open door policy of recruitment from becoming a revolving door of attrition, we must develop and implement learner centered retention strategies that will enhance growth and success.

The Charge of the Retention Taskforce

In May of 1985, a Retention Taskforce was established by the recommendation of Dr. Charlie Nelms, Vice President for Student Services. The Taskforce was given the charge to ultimately produce a "retention plan" for Sinclair Community College that will reduce attrition, increase enrollment, and most importantly, enhance student success.

Oftentimes, institutions look for short-term "quick fix" remedies to attrition problems. These approaches usually are implemented as a reaction to a problem without much consideration as to how they relate to other institutional practices, changing student needs and demographics, and the many underlying and intertwined forces that impede student persistence and success. Their impact on retention is usually minimal, short-lived, and often shade the real issues.

In addressing their charge, the Taskforce was given short-term, intermediate, and long-term objectives to pursue. The intent was to develop a retention plan based on a thorough understanding of all the factors both internal and external to the institution that were relevant.

The objectives of the Retention Taskforce were:

Short-Term

1. Review institutional (Sinclair) procedures and practices that impede student success;

2. Collect information from around the state and country relative to retention strategies that work. Such data would also include retention plans/documents that have been prepared by other colleges;

3. Collect and analyze statistical data relative to the enrollment/progression pattern of SCC students, overall and by Division or program area.

Intermediate

Preparation of an interim report consisting of findings and strategies for bringing about desired changes.

Long-Term

Preparation of a retention plan for the College.

The Retention Taskforce, from the outset, moved in a deliberate, organized, and conscientious manner to assure that the final plan would provide the best possible results. The process took a great deal of planning, discussion, research, and evaluation. It took time.

The Retention Taskforce at Sinclair Community College

Experts in the field of higher education are in agreement that retention demands that the total higher education community (academics, business services, institutional advancement, and student services) work together; optimal benefits will be gained only if effective programs of retention are developed and executed cooperatively. . . (Wilder, J.R., 1983).

In order for any student retention plan to be successful it must:

1. receive full support from top levels of the administration, including the Board of Trustees, and

2. be comprehensive in nature; that is, it must touch upon all points where students interact with the institution (Noel, 1978).

In determining the composition of the Retention Taskforce, great consideration was given to providing representation from many units of the institution that students interact with including faculty, administration, student services, and students themselves.

The Sinclair Community College Retention Taskforce Members are:

Dennis Lettman, (Chairperson), Director of Counseling and Student Development
Ken Angel, Assistant Professor, English
Frieda Bennett, Professor/Chairperson, Secretarial Studies
Janice Bogan, Director of Financial Aid
Edwina Byrd, Professor, Sociology
Harvey Chew, Assistant Professor, Mathematics
Helen Collins, Student
Dick Erbaugh, Professor/Chairperson, Automotive Technology
Pat Falkner, Director, Registration and Student Records
Noel Farrier, Associate Professor, Physical Science
Priscilla Haag-Mutter, Career Development Specialist
Linda Hawkins, Regular Adjunct/Counselor, Allied Health
Bonnie Johnson, Dean, Extended Learning and Human Services
Jim Johnson, Professor, Chemistry
Carol Lazarus, Assistant Professor, Developmental Mathematics
Khoo, Manager, User Support Services
Bill Moore, Counselor, Counseling and Student Development
Rick Novak, Director, Admissions
Joan Patten, Institutional Research Associate
Kelly Ramsey, Instructor/Counselor, Fine and Performing Arts
Gordon Robinson, Assistant Professor/Counselor, Business Technologies
Phyllis Salter, Instructor/Counselor, Developmental Studies
Rebecca Schmale, Coordinator, Off-Campus Credit Program, Continuing Education
Eleanor Young, Assistant to the Vice President for Instruction

The next section will provide a brief review of the literature in regards to student retention and persistence.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As a prelude to the process of developing retention strategies for Sinclair, it was essential to establish a baseline of knowledge from which to work. In a sense, Taskforce members acquired a level of expertise on student retention by reviewing articles, books, tapes, attending conferences, and visiting other colleges. A compilation of all these resources is available for review at any time by interested college personnel. In addition, an annotated bibliography of published retention strategies implemented at other institutions is included in Appendix A of this report.

A pluthora of articles and research publications on student retention and attrition have been written. This section will highlight some of the major ideas cited in the literature that the Taskforce felt to be most critical in considering a retention plan for Sinclair.

A Statement of Philosophy

Looking back to the 1960's Chickering (1969) in his writings about recruitment and retention activities, stressed how important it is that colleges demonstrate a strong sense of humanization, personalization, and individualization in dealing with young adults. Chickering cites a reciprocal relationship between the college and the student: To persist, students must satisfy the requirements of the college environment; equally important, the college environment must satisfy the individual needs of its students. Chickering's view of congruence or fit between the student and the institution as a factor in retention has been the predominant philosophical underpinning in regards to retention theory and practices through the 1970's and into the 1980's. Cope and Hannah (1975) contend that student persistence is directly related to the degree to which the student fits in with the dominating social and academic value system of the campus. Similarly, Tinto (1975) argues that either low goal (student) commitment or low institutional commitment can lead to drop out, and Noel (1980) discusses the importance of student and college fit as a factor in retention. Once more, the application of this line of thought to practice becomes more discerning in relation to community colleges with predominately commuter students. As Chickering (1974) points out, commuters find it especially difficult to achieve this match solely on the basis of their own initiative because of their psychological, social, and physical distance from the college; institutional assistance can be critically important to them.

This line of thought, then, argues that institutions must become cognizant of the factors both internal and external to the student that impede their ability to satisfy requirements of the academic environment and thus lead to a greater risk of attrition. Effective retention programs can then be built around satisfying student needs and molding the fit between the college and the student to enhance success. The "sink or swim" attitude with regard to student success must be replaced with proactive institutional practices that will facilitate growth and persistence (Roueche, J., Armes, 1980). From a marketing

perspective, Peter Drucker (1974) talks about the aim of marketing "as knowing and understanding the customer so well that . . . service fits him and sells itself." Phillip Kotler (1976) emphasizes that "the education buyer should be able to tell how well the college is likely to meet his or her particular educational needs and desires." So, what is essential to recruit students to the institution must also be followed through after enrollment to retain them.

Student Factors That Impact Retention

1. Economically Disadvantaged Students

   Because low economic students are in financial need, they are likely to select an institution on the basis of proximity to home and/or low tuition. Because community colleges fit these criteria, the first higher education experience for a great many is within the community college (Rouech and Snow, 1977; delos Santos, Montemayor, and Solis, 1980).

   Indicators of Low-Income Students that Impact Persistence:

   a. Low-income students, because they are in financial need, tend to work fulltime or parttime along with taking classes and are likely to be on some form of financial aid (de los Santos, Montemayor, and Solis, 1980). A decrease in financial support due to losing a job or financial aid can severely limit their resources to pay educational costs and attend school. Also, the responsibility of work along with school (particularly if work is fulltime) is likely to cut into these students' study and class time.

   b. Low-income students are likely to have attended poor public schools, experienced higher rates of failure, and lacked positive feedback or encouragement from teachers. Thusly, psychological characteristics such as low confidence, low motivation, low assertiveness, and lack of career goals may be evident as these students enter college (Friedlander, 1980; Meyers and Drevlow, 1982); Maynard, 1980; and Beal and Noel, 1980).

   c. Low-income students are likely to perceive higher education as foreign and unresponsive to their needs (Adolphus, 1979). To a large extent, this can be attributed to the liklihood that the students' parents are unable to provide the guidance, support, and encouragement to cope with college life.

   d. Astin (1975, 1977) characterized low-income students as having a lower level of involvement than higher income students. He notes

that low-income students tend not to engage in relationships with faculty, and tend not to work towards improving skills and implementing career plans.

2. Academically Underprepared Students

Community colleges tend to attract students with low academic skills because of their open admissions policies and students' lack of confidence and motivation to pursue four year programs with stricter admissions requirements. Roueche and Roueche (1982) have cited reports by community colleges indicating better than half of entering freshmen read below the eighth grade level.

Indicators of Academically Underprepared Students that Impact Persistence:

a. Academically underprepared students, by definition, come to college lacking basic skills necessary for success (Roueche, 1967, 1972; Roueche and Kirk, 1973; Moore, 1970, 1971, 1976; and Kraetsch, 1980). Skill deficiencies are evidenced by poor or erratic performance in high school, low standardized test scores, and a higher withdrawal rate in college.

b. The researchers cited above as well as Waterhouse (1978) describe psychological/social characteristics of underprepared students as: Low motivation, poor abstract/conceptual skills, low self-esteem, unclear goals, and verbally passive.

c. Green (1977) studied minority underachievers who lack the academic self-esteem to be successful in college. Although there can be found a large number of minority and economically disadvantaged students who lack academic skills, Henderson and Plummer (1978) cite widows, divorcees, war veterans, career changers, and workers whose jobs have been lost as displaying lower levels of academic preparedness.

3. Students With Uncertain Goals

One need only look at the distribution of indicated majors of Sinclair students to note the relatively large number who are undecided. Although many researchers feel that undecided students are a heterogenous group and caution making generalizations about them, there are some characteristics that can be noted.

Indicators of Undecided Students That Impact Persistence:

a. There are some factors that have found to be predictive of attrition that have also been used to describe undecided students. They include: lack of career objectives, unsure degree expectations, erratic changes in major, and lack of advising (Astin, 1971; Cope and Hannah, 1975; and Pantages and Creedon, 1978).

b. Undecided students may enter college confused about their identity and their self concept - both critical components of the career choice process (Rose and Elton, 1971; and Crites, 1981). Students who are able to resolve identify and self-concept issues are more likely to persist in college.

4. Returning Learners

Returning learners, particularly adults, comprise a large portion of Sinclair's student population. The average age of a Sinclair student is 29 years - a clear measure of the adult presence. Decreases in traditional college age students, demands for more educational opportunities for women and minorities, and educational opportunities offered by business and industry all contribute to an increase in adult returning learners.

Indicators of Returning Learners That Impact Persistence:

a. Adult learners may be more likely to persist in and be attracted to colleges that have adult education program that can clearly communicate potential benefits and gains for the students (Pappas and Foster, 1983; Lenz, 1980).

b. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) found in a large study that students at the younger end of the adult scale tend to be more persistent than older adults.

c. A strong positive correlation exists between previous educational attainment and success and future educational persistence for adult students.

d. Personality and personal adjustment variables have been explored with adult returners in relation to academic persistence. Studies by Cross (1979, 1981) and Knox (1977) found that the presence of anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, fear of class content (i.e. math) and fear of failure predispose drop-out among adults.

e. The nature of educational programs, course offerings, instructional style, registration/admission policies, etc. have been related to persistence of adult learners. Such factors as non-relevant degree requirements, lack of any credit for experience programs, unnecessary prerequisites, and generic non-relevant degree programs were cited as having a negative impact on adult persistence (Knox, 1977; Darkenwald, 1981; Spratt, 1981).

f. Faculty behavior directly influences adult persistence. Sanders (1980) found that adults are more likely to persist in classes where instructors provide concrete tasks, goals and expectations, and where course content is relevant to life.

In addition to these student characteristics, another group of students at a higher risk of drop-out are commuters. Commuters can fall into any one or more of the four groups mentioned, or none at all. They comprise 100% of Sinclair's student body. Any institutional plan to increase retention must fully consider the needs of commuter students.

Priscilla Haag, Career Development Specialist at Sinclair, recently completed a study discussing strategies and issues related to improving commuter student retention. Her report is contained in Appendix B of the preliminary report.

Institutional Factors That Impact Retention

Of all the research into the effects of institutional practices, policies, and services that impact student retention, probably the most widely recognized is the publication by Beal and Noel (1980) of a study conducted in 1979 by the American College Testing Program called "What Works in Student Retention."

This survey solicited the opinions of college officials at 858 institutions nationwide. Listed below are the most important factors cited as influencing student retention both positively and negatively.

The top positive factors (in rank order):

1. Caring attitude of faculty and staff
2. High quality of teaching
3. Adequate financial aid
4. Student involvement in campus life
5. High quality of advising

The top negative factors (in rank order):

1. Inadequate academic advising
2. Inadequate curricular offerings
3. Conflict between class schedule and job
4. Inadequate financial aid
5. Inadequate counseling support systems
6. Inadequate extra curricular offerings

It is not surprising that the top two positive factors related to retention involve faculty/student relationships and quality of teaching. Several studies have demonstrated that faculty student interaction has a direct impact on retention (Baldridge, Kemerer, and Green, 1982; Lenning, Beal, and Saner, 1980; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1980; Tinto, 1975; and Spady, 1971).

Positive faculty/student relationships generate healthy attitudes among students not only toward the learning process but also toward the college in general. It is evident that students do not enroll in colleges to spend time

with administrators, counselors, and other personnel; they enter to learn from knowledgeable faculty who represent their fields of interest. Dissatisfaction with the entire establishment will result if students do not have access to competent, interested, and caring faculty members (Wilder, 1983).

Additionally, faculty members provide the vital link and source of referral to help students identify and seek out the help they need from campus resources such as counseling, advising, tutoring, etc. Commuter students, adult learners and others who tend not to become involved with college activities and programs may have as their only source of interaction their instructors.

In addition to faculty student relationships, other institutional practices and strategies that impact retention such as counseling, advising, extracurricular activities, etc. are cited further in the annotated bibliography in Appendix A.

III. METHODOLOGY

The previous section summarized major findings in the research to help our understanding of student retention and persistence. It cited student characteristics and institutional practices that most directly apply. This section will describe the activities, events, projects, and presentations conducted by the Taskforce that led to the development of a plan to increase student retention.

Although there is great value in learning about successful retention efforts implemented at other institutions and characteristics of students that may be predictive of attrition behavior, the greatest value in terms of impacting retention comes from understanding our own institution and student body. Pascarella (1986) in an article published in the "Journal of College Student Personnel", states ". . . factors shown to influence persistence, or even the results of comprehensive programmatic interventions designed to increase student retention, may not be generally applied from one institution to another. . ." This observation is a result of an inability to replicate research findings across different institutions of studys pertaining to student persistence. Patterns of influences on persistence and withdrawal may differ substantially for different institutions. The researcher goes on to suggest that an understanding of student retention and efforts in that regard will be most effective if addressed at the institutional level. This was a key consideration as the Taskforce addressed its charge.

1. Definition of Retention

It was first decided that a definition of retention should be adopted. Who are we trying to retain? What can serve as the basis for evaluating a retention plan and determining a retention rate for Sinclair? Although the goal is to retain all students, there exists a body of students within Sinclair who do not wish to be retained. They come here for various reasons pertaining to personal enrichment or job skill development. Their enrollment may be short-term because their objectives have been met. In these cases, presumably, institutional practices did not impact their decision to leave. Please do not misunderstand. The college must do everything possible to encourage and accommodate the "casual" student. However, in terms of student retention and persistence, particular focus must be directed to those who leave short of achieving their goals - not because they wanted to, but because of some internal (student related) or external (institutional related) factors.

A definition of student retention was adopted as follows:

"The re-enrollment of those students for whom continuance of their education at Sinclair Community College is appropriate to their stated goals." (from "Focusing on Retention as a Commitment to Success", Alabama Community, Junior, and Technical Colleges).

2. Identification of Student's Educational Goals

The next step was to determine how we would identify students entering Sinclair who fit the definition. It was clear that efforts to retain students must begin upon initial enrollment - to act in a proactive rather

than a reactive fashion. The Taskforce recommended that the identification of student's educational goals be indicated clearly on the admissions application; that their be a clear distinction between degree/certificate seeking students and those attending for personal enrichment. Degree/certificate seeking students were felt to be those students most appropriate to the definition as their stated goal represents a long-term commitment requiring persistence in order to be successful.

It was recommended to the Director of Admissions that a revised admissions application be designed to clearly identify student's educational goals; that a clear difference be made in terms of degree/certificate seeking and personal enrichment or job skill development. The new admissions application now incorporates this sufficiently.

Information on new students' ASSET planning form also states an educational goal. The appropriate department handling this program will use the information to identify students for whom retention efforts should be directed.

3. Introduce the Retention Taskforce to College Personnel

The Taskforce felt that college administrators, faculty, and staff should be aware of their formation, goals and objectives. This was to lay a foundation for further communication and understanding of retention issues and to promote their importance.

A presentation was made to President's Cabinet to outline the Taskforce's goals and objectives, present a definition of retention, and provide some preliminary findings derived from a review of the literature.

Academic advisors on the Taskforce gave a brief presentation to their respective divisions during the Fall 1985 faculty conference. Their presentations were able to reach most fulltime faculty at the college.

4. Review the Literature and Identify Exemplary Programs on Retention

It was necessary, as stated in the previous section, to learn as much as possible about current research, issues, and workable strategies pertaining to improving retention. A basis of knowledge was necessary to move forward from as well as to derive ideas for Sinclair based on what has been successful elsewhere.

A compilation of research articles, books, manuals, written retention plans at other institutions, and other printed materials were collected and reviewed by Taskforce members. A mini retention information library is set up in the Counseling and Student Development Center. Also, some Taskforce members visited community colleges in Illinois and Kentucky to view some programs and services they have implemented that successfully impact retention. Some Taskforce members attended a national conference on retention/attrition in Lexington, Ky.

5. Notifying Students of Cancelled Classes

In reviewing current enrollment patterns at Sinclair, it became evident that a relatively substantial number of students are affected by cancelled classes each quarter. For example, during spring quarter, 1985, 1,627 students (325.4 FTE) were affected by cancelled classes. Of those, only 19.98% registered for another section of the same class and 34.91% did not register for any other class in replace. The remaining 45.11% registered for a different course altogether. The Taskforce felt this was an area that some immediate, direct interventions could be implemented to impact enrollment. Table 2 shows the impact of the following actions:

Fall quarter, 1986 the Retention Taskforce presented a formal recommendation to Dean's Council:

> Beginning fall quarter, 1985-86, each academic division should arrange for professional persons (advisors, chairpersons, faculty) to meet students at classrooms assigned to courses that have been cancelled. The persons' role should be to give direction for registration changes to those students who show up for the cancelled classes. This recommended coverage pertains to the first scheduled class meeting of courses cancelled too late for students to have received advance notice from the registration office.

Out of this recommendation it was hoped that students who actually showed up to a cancelled class would be met by a college official to assist them with alternatives. Many classes get cancelled just before the beginning of the quarter - too late to receive advanced notice through the mail. When students show up at cancelled classes oftentimes they are confused as to what to do next and/or are upset. Many do not re-register and, perhaps even worse, develop a negative impression of the college. To have a person available to meet with these students would hopefully off-set this occurrence.

The Deans and divisions did react to this recommendation in a consistent and effective manner. It should be noted that some departments had been applying this practice all along. Now, though, it was made consistent throughout all or most departments.

What resulted is as follows: of the 1,033 students affected by cancelled classes for fall, 1986 (incidentally, less students were affected than were spring, 1985, probably due to a more conservative approach to scheduling sections), 24.78% registered for another section of the same class and 21.88% did not register for any class. The percent of students lost over last spring quarter due to cancelled classes decreased by 13%.

A further recommendation was made to the Director of Registration and Records to modify the cancelled class notice sent to students. The new notice gives a clear explanation to students about their cancelled classes and offers information helpful to them in making necessary changes, i.e. the inclusion of divisional office phone numbers.

The new cancelled class notice sent to students effective winter quarter, 1986:

We regret that the class listed below for which you registered cannot be offered at the time which you selected. It is quite possible that it is available at other times. You may discuss adjusting your schedule by calling your division office at: Allied Health 226-3029, Business 226-3054, Engineering 226-7922, Extended Learning and Human Services, 226-2760, Fine Arts 226-2809 and Liberal Arts and Sciences 226-2990.

If you are receiving Financial Aid: This cancellation might affect your award. Contact them if you have any questions about this.

Section 0050 DEV 0095 HAS BEEN CANCELLED

The winter quarter statistics resulting from both of these new implementations are shown below in Table 2. A further reduction in the percent of students not registering for another class occurred. Of 1,123 students affected, only 14.87% did not re-enroll. This is a 20% decrease over last spring when no intervention took place. Another striking statistic shows 55.39% enrolled in another section of the same class. This is an increase of 35.41% over last spring. A continuation and further refinement of cancelled class notification procedures seems to be an important pursuit relative to impacting enrollment and retention.

	(1) Not Registered for Any Class	(2) Registered for Another Section of Cancelled Class	(3) Registered for Classes Other than Cancelled Class	Total	FTE Affected
Spring, 1985					
No. of Students Cancelled Out of Class	568	325	734	1,627	325.4
Percent of Total	34.91	19.98	45.11		
Total of Columns 1 & 3	80.02				
Summer, 1985					
No. of Students Cancelled Out of Class	246	112	414	772	154.4
Percent of Total	31.87	14.51	53.63		
Total of Columns 1 & 3	85.49				
Fall, 1985					
No. of Students Cancelled Out of Class	226	256	551	1,033	206.6
Percent of Total	21.98	24.78	53.34		
Total of Columns 1 & 3	75.22				
Winter, 1986					
No. of Students Cancelled Out of Class	167	622	334	1,123	224.6
Percent of Total	14.87	55.39	29.74		
Total of Columns 1 & 3	44.61				

(This information courtesy of Director of Institutional Research)
Table 2. Summary of cancelled classes for spring, summer, fall, 1985, and winter, 1986.

6. Non-Attendance Mailers

One of the major aspects of student behavior that can predict attrition is non-attendance in class. Early intervention in aiding students with regard to attendance problems can be a powerful retention activity. In fact, strategies to address non-attendance are part of the final retention plan. As a short-term effort, however, the Taskforce felt that mailings sent to students regarding their non-attendance in class could be improved in terms of timing and content.

It was recommended to the Director of Registration and Records that non-attendance mailers be sent out earlier in the quarter before the end of the third week. This would give students more time to take the necessary steps to either drop the course or gain assistance from the instructor, advisor or counselor to work out some alternative - perhaps even return to class and pass it. The mailers did get out earlier in the winter quarter as recommended.

The wording of the mailer was changed to be more useful to students. It states options available to them and phone numbers of division offices and the registration room number. This revised mailer was implemented winter quarter and states:

NON-ATTENDANCE MAILER

The instructor of the class listed below states that you have not been attending class. If you wish to complete the class, contact your instructor immediately to find out if it is still possible. If you do not know how to contact your instructor, call the Division office as follows: Allied Health 226-3029; Business Technologies 226-3054; Engineering Technologies 226-7922; Extended Learning and Human Services 226-2760; Fine and Performing Arts 226-2544; Liberal Arts and Science 226-2990. If you have been attending another section of this course, you need to change your schedule to reflect this. If you do not intend to complete the course, you must officially drop it to avoid receiving an "F" grade. Classes can be changed or dropped at the registration counter in Room 10-231 (building 10, 2nd floor).

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7. Withdrawal Pilot Study

The Taskforce felt that it would be important to collect some data relative to why students withdraw from Sinclair. This information is useful in determining what role, if any, the institution could play in helping students remain in school. Although there are several reasons why students withdraw, many external to the institution, the data could identify some factors that the institution could possibly impact on. Additionally, the survey hoped to shed some light on patterns of student behavior that could be useful in predicting student withdrawal.

The pilot study was conducted during spring quarter, 1986 from April 8 through May 23. During that time, 878 student withdrawals were recorded by the Registrar. Of those, 282 students completed a withdrawal questionnaire (the questionnaire and results can be found in Apendix B) and 45 were further interviewed by counselors.

Some rather significant findings from the questionnaire were:

- 28% who withdrew did not list a major
- 63% who withdrew took fewer than six credits
- 43% withdrew because of work obligations
- 79% never met with a counselor or advisor

The questionnaire results and the counseling interviews with students shed the following recommendations:

1. More emphasis should be placed upon academic advising.

2. Course scheduling should consider students' work and personal obligations.

3. Opportunities to adjust class schedules when they conflict with work should be better communicated to students.

4. There should be an orientation for students.

5. Student support groups and early identification of academic problems should be implemented.

8. Retention Program Conducted by Randy Levitz, Ph.D.

On May 8 and 9, 1986 a two day retention program was conducted at Sinclair. The program presenter was Dr. Randi Levitz, Executive Vice President of the National Center for Student Retention and author of several publications on the topic. The purpose of the program was to promote an awareness of retention to the college community and to elicit recommendations for increasing retention.

The program involved a series of focus group interviews with students and key college personnel during the first day. On the second day, Dr. Levitz presented a series of workshops for all personnel. She concluded the program with a list of recommendations presented to President's Council, Deans, and the Retention Taskforce.

The major points expressed during the focus groups and the recommendations made by Dr. Levitz are summarized in appendix C.

9. Follow-up Questionnaire to Faculty and Staff

As a follow-up to Dr. Levitz' presentation, a questionnaire was sent to all faculty and staff asking for their input regarding the following:

1. List the things faculty and staff could do to increase retention.

2. List college-wide activities that could be done to increase retention.

Fifty-four questionnaires were returned. Many of the responses were thoughfully expressed and used as another source of information in developing the retention plan.

10. "Recipes For Retention" Workshop

On Friday September 5, 1986 a sub-group of the Retention Taskforce presented a workshop to Sinclair faculty titled "Recipes For Retention". The workshop was designed to let faculty members learn from each other about successful classroom teaching strategies and to provide input into the college retention plan.

The workshop was well attended and many good ideas generated. A booklet of retention "recipes" that came out of the workshop will be distributed to faculty next winter. In addition, several points expressed during the workshop were considered in developing the retention plan.

Some major points expressed were:

1. Mandatory placement and assessment
2. Follow-up advising plan for new students
3. Required orientation for new students
4. Teacher recruitment and hiring standards raised
5. Improve classroom teaching techniques
6. More support for part-time faculty
7. Increase professional development programming

Up until now, this report has established the foundation from which the retention plan was generated. There was no single set of ideas or activity that influenced the plan. Rather, it was the integration of all the research and information compiled by the Taskforce over the past several months. The following two sections will present the plan that the Taskforce is recommending to increase student retention at Sinclair Community College.

IV. A MODEL OF STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

A student retention plan, to be truly comprehensive and effective, must touch upon all areas of the institution that students interact with and must encompass the whole continuum of experiences that students face as they begin and progress through college. The recommendations proposed by the Retention Taskforce have been designed and organized with this in mind.

A model of "Student Retention and Success" was adapted from similar models used effectively at other community colleges. Among the most notable users of this model are the Alabama community, junior, and technical colleges and Jefferson Community College in Louisville, Kentucky. The model consists of four distinct phases that are continuous and interactive (see figure 1): pre-enrollment phase, campus entry phase, enrollment phase, and post-enrollment phase.

The model is cyclical in nature in that student outcomes from post-enrollment feed back into the model as either recruitment or retention. Those students who successfully complete their educational goals at Sinclair can be utilized as recruitment agents to attract other students in the pre-enrollment phase. Students who need to re-enroll to continue pursuing their educational goals become the targets of retention efforts in the campus entry or enrollment phase.

The elements of the model are:

Phase I: Pre-Enrollment

The pre-enrollment phase address those factors and processes which might affect the retention of students before they enter the institution. It focuses on community awareness of the institution and communications with inquiring or prospective students. Consideration in this phase is given to:

1. projecting a positive image of the college
2. effective and accurate communications, oral and written
3. conveying realistic expectations for entry and success

Phase II: Campus-Entry

The campus-entry phase addresses policies, procedures, practices, and experiences involving students before they enter the classroom. This phase bridges the gap (transition) between pre-enrollment and enrollment. It focuses on meeting student needs prior to the beginning of the term to facilitate academic success and persistence. It should be noted that many aspects of the entry phase must continue throughout enrollment to be effective. Consideration in this phase is given to:

1. dissemination of information

2. serving special needs of students

3. admissions, financial aid, and registration

4. academic advising, counseling and orientation

5. assessment and course placement

Phase III: Enrollment

The enrollment phase begins when students enter the classroom and ends when they complete or withdraw from their course(s). The emphasis here is placed on the "retention power" of the institution while students are enrolled in academic programs. The enrollment phase considers:

1. effective instructional techniques

2. incentives and opportunities for faculty growth

3. proactive, intrusive counseling/advising efforts

Phase IV: Post-Enrollment

The post-enrollment phase addresses those students who do not appear to be re-enrolling. It focuses on fostering relationships with students who are potential returners, withdrawers, academic dismissals, and graduates. This phase considers the re-enrollment needs of continuing students as well.

Data, Research, and Computer Services

This component transcends all phases and addresses the data, research, and computer support necessary to:

1. explore, analyze, and predict retention patterns of the student body as well as various sub-groups.

2. conduct student opinion and needs assessments.

3. provide research for the development of new retention initiatives.

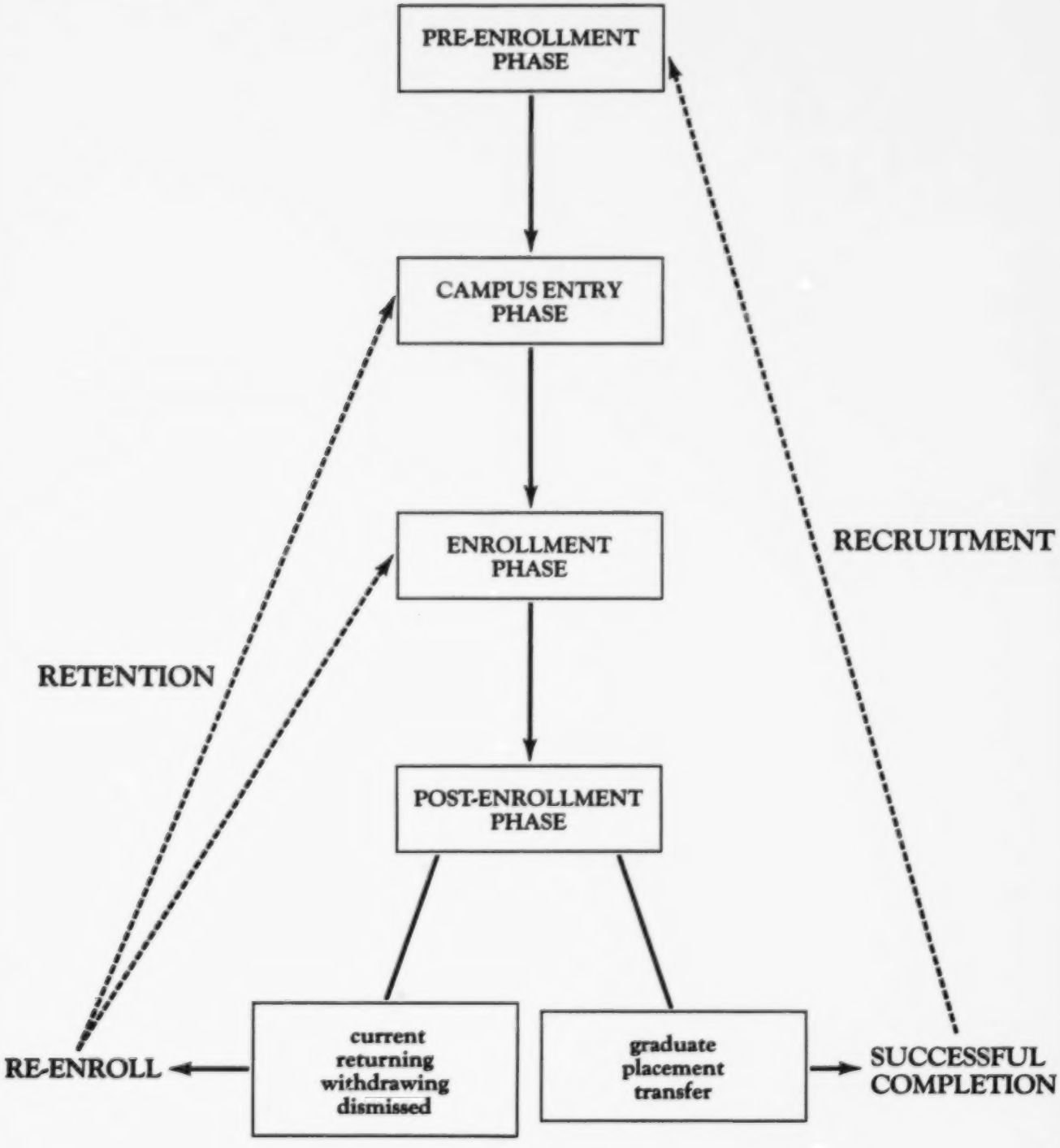
4. provide student data to assist in the implementation of retention efforts.

5. evaluate the effectiveness of retention efforts.

Retention Committee

This component is a coordinating and advising body that faciliates the implementation of a retention plan.

A MODEL OF STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS FOR SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Definition of Terms

Retention is a term that can take on several different meanings. It can range from being a vague, ambiguous notion that describes student enrollment behavior to a quantifiable rate obtained through statistical analysis. Retention can be viewed as a process or a product; a means or a goal. Further, the question arises with regard to who is the target of retention. Be it a process or a product, the population of students with whom retention will be examined must be clearly delineated.

The "what" and "who" of retention must be operationally defined at the institutional level before determining "how" it will be addressed. For the purposes of developing this report and for future efforts dealing with student retention, the following definitions have been adopted:

retention "the re-enrollment of those students for whom continuance of their education at Sinclair is appropriate to their stated goals."

Student's **stated goals** refers to completion of a degree or certificate.

There exists four types of enrollment in which students can be classified: current, returning, withdrawal, and potentially returning. All four types of enrollment are of concern to the institution. However, it is the first three that individually and collectively are the targets of retention as cited in this report. The fourth type, potentially returning, is a target of recruitment efforts.

1. **current** - a new or continuing student enrolled for at least two consecutive quarters (excluding summer). Example: enrolled fall to winter and/or winter to spring and/or spring to fall, etc.

2. **returning** - enrolled for at least one quarter, then out for at least one quarter (not to exceed four quarters, excluding summer), then re-enroll. These are also referred to as stop-outs. Example: enrolled fall, out winter, out spring, out summer, enrolled fall.

3. **withdrawal** - enrolled for a quarter, but did not complete any courses that quarter; withdrew with record.

4. **potentially returning** - previously enrolled at least one quarter, but not returning after four quarters, (excluding summer). Example: enrolled fall, enrolled winter, out spring, out summer, out fall, out winter, out spring.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE STUDENT RETENTION

This section describes the recommendations established by the Taskforce. They are presented in sequential order according to the model of retention previously illustrated.

The following points should be kept in mind while examining the recommendations for purposes of implementation:

1. The recommendations are proposed with the expectation and hope that they will be implemented. It is recognized, however, that after further deliberation the recommendations may be modified in such a way that will most effectively meet student needs within the fiscal and policy structure of the institution.

2. The recommendations are not listed in any order of priority or importance. Their impact on retention will depend upon how they are implemented.

3. Each recommendation contains a suggested timeframe and college units responsible for action. These guidelines vary in terms of specificity depending upon the nature of the recommendation.

4. Some recommendations can be implemented immediately. Some require further exploration or development before they can be implemented.

5. It is recognized that some of these recommendations are, in some form, already being implemented. Nevertheless, their importance to retention is such that they are included as aspects of a comprehensive retention plan. Current practices can always be improved.

6. Some recommendations require fiscal resources to implement while others require little funding, if any. As the costs for implementation are considered, they must be weighted against long-term gains resulting from increased retention and enrollment.

PHASE I: PRE-ENROLLMENT

Phase II: Campus Entry

Phase III: Enrollment

Phase IV: Post-Enrollment

The next four recommendations fall under

PHASE I: PRE-ENROLLMENT

PRE-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 1

The College should identify and utilize it's best "image makers" in student recruitment efforts.

There should be a system to identify student success stories and communicate them to the public.

Responsibility For Action: The Office of Admissions, since it is primarily responsible for coordinating student recruitment activities, should include faculty members, current successful students, and alumni in recruitment efforts.

The Public Information Office should actively seek student success stories and promote them to the public.

Timeframe: Immediate and on-going.

Benefits: Improved image of the College.

More effective recruiting.

More realistic student expectations.

PRE-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 2

Provide and require workshops for classified staff and student assistants on telephone effectiveness and courtesy.

Responsibility For Action: The staff senate should recommend the workshops and set them up in conjunction with SDIC.

Timeframe: Workshops begin spring quarter, 1987. They should be repeated periodically for new employees.

Benefits: Support staff are the "front porch" of the institution. With strong telephone communication skills they can be positive image-makers.

PRE-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 3

Follow-up contacts from departments and divisions should be made with new students in addition to the general acceptance letters.

Responsibility For Action: Each department/division should develop a contact system for new students to be coordinated with the Office of Admissions.

Timeframe: Begin winter quarter, 1987

Benefits: Contacts will reinforce students acceptance and will communicate care and concern for them.

Oftentimes, there is a lengthy period between acceptance and entry. This will help to fill the gap.

PRE-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 4

The terms "one-year" and "two-year" programs should be stricken from printed publications. Developmental coursework in reading, writing, and math should be listed as prerequisite to program curricula but can be waived upon evidence of competency.

Responsibility For Action: Personnel and Curriculum committee of Academic Council and the faculty senate should review and recommend this change.

Timeframe: Review can begin immediately. Changes can be reflected in publications as they are reprinted.

Benefits: Students will be prepared to take developmental courses if needed. It will not come as a last minute surprise to them.

The negative impact on students self-esteem as a result of having to take extra "remedial" courses will be reduced.

Phase I: Pre-Enrollment

PHASE II: CAMPUS ENTRY

Phase III: Enrollment

Phase IV: Post-Enrollment

The next six recommendations fall under

PHASE II: CAMPUS ENTRY

CAMPUS ENTRY RECOMMENDATION 1

*Establish a one-step student and employee information center, visibly and centrally located on campus.

Responsibility For Action: President's Council should express support for a centralized information center and request that a proposal be developed for their review. President's Council should identify appropriate person(s) to study the project and make recommendations.

The purpose of a one-step center is to provide students and employees with easy access to a wide variety of information about the College. This would include information about programs of study, registration, financial aid, counseling/advising, clubs/sports, directory, campus events and activities, etc.

Timeframe: Proposal to be reviewed by President's Council - May, 1987
The proposal should indicate when the center could be established and all costs involved.

Benefits: Students and employees will be able to get information from one place instead of many places.

College resources and activities will be more effectively publicized.

*also Enrollment Phase

CAMPUS ENTRY RECOMMENDATION 2

*Specialized programs and services to assist high-risk, special needs students should be established or refined to assure maximum effectiveness.

Responsibility For Action: All student services and academic departments that function to serve special needs students should review, refine and, as voids exist, establish programs and services to meet student needs.

Special needs students can be identified as:

1. Handicapped (physically, emotionally, and learning disabled)
2. Undecided
3. Academically and economically disadvantaged
4. Non-native speaking
5. Adult returning
6. Minorities
7. Senior citizens
8. Men and women seeking non-traditional careers

Appropriate fiscal resources should be made available to effectively serve these students.

Timeframe: Review of existing programs and services should begin immediately. Establishing or expanding programs and services should be addressed with the next MWO process in February, 1987.

Benefits: Special needs students, given effective support, will be more likely to persist and achieve to their potential.

*also Enrollment Phase

CAMPUS ENTRY RECOMMENDATION 3

Admissions, registration, and financial aid services should be convenient, non-intimidating, and easily accessible to students.

Responsibility For Action: Each area should examine current procedures and practices as they affect students. They should also examine the interrelationships between them and how those affect students as well. Changes should be sought that will maximize convenience, non-intimidation, and accessibility of services to students. Phone-in registration should be considered.

Timeframe: Immediate and on-going

Benefits: As these services are provided effectively to meet student needs, student success will likely increase.

These areas are very sensitive to student perceptions and can easily convey a positive or negative image of the institution. The better the services are in meeting student needs the more likely it becomes for positive images to be conveyed.

CAMPUS ENTRY RECOMMENDATION 4

*An orientation experience should be required of all new degree or certificate seeking students.

An effective orientation format is to develop a five week, one credit course to be contained in the first half of College Survival Skills. The second half of College Survival Skills will focus on study skills. Students will be required to take the five week orientation component for one credit and option to take the study skills component for another credit.

Short orientation sessions or day long sessions prior to enrollment are other options to consider but not as effective as a course.

Responsibility For Action: A Taskforce should be established to explore options and recommend a plan for new student orientation.

The Taskforce should consist of:

1. the Assistant to the Vice President for Instruction
2. a representative from Counseling and Student Development
3. a representative from Office of Admissions
4. a faculty member from developmental studies

Timeframe: Taskforce recommendations completed - July, 1987
Implementation - January, 1988

Benefits: Orientation serves to reduce student anxiety about the unknown, enhances students' knowledge of college resources, and builds a better foundation for student success.

*also Enrollment Phase

CAMPUS ENTRY RECOMMENDATION 5

*A comprehensive academic advising plan should be instituted.

Responsibility For Action: Divisional advising plans should continue to be developed and supported by the institution.

In addition, the following qualitative aspects of academic advising should be addressed by the academic counselors' council and integrated within divisional plans:

1. the information necessary for advisors to advise competently including student background data, assessment results, student needs/goals enrollment history, program requirements, etc.
2. a student to advisor ratio that will allow for effective advising.
3. characteristics of a good advisor, particularly from a student's point of view.
4. professional development opportunities for academic advisors and faculty advisors to learn new techniques and tools for effective advising.
5. role of other college personnel in advising such as student services counselors, career counselors, peer helpers, etc.

Timeframe: Divisional plans implemented - January, 1987
Qualitative aspects on-going; some can be addressed immediately.

Benefits: An increased number of students will receive the mentoring, information, and support that advising provides to help sustain them throughout college.

A comprehensive advising plan with quality and process will maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

*also Enrollment Phase

CAMPUS ENTRY RECOMMENDATION 6

Academic skills assessment in reading, English, and mathematics and subsequent course placement should be required of all degree or certificate seeking students. Necessary developmental coursework and other course prerequisites should be mandatory and enforced.

Responsibility For Action: A Taskforce should be established and charged to develop and recommend a plan for mandatory assessment and course placement. The plan should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Criteria to determine which students should be involved and when.
2. Cost analysis, distribution, and required resources.
3. Process for administration, implementation, enforcement, and evaluation.
4. The Taskforce will monitor and review the assessment program on a continuing basis.

The Taskforce should be composed of the following persons:

1. Director of Counseling and Student Development
2. Chairperson, Math Department, or designated faculty
3. Chairperson, English Department, or designated faculty
4. Chairperson, Developmental Studies, or designated faculty
5. Chairperson, Academic Counselor's Council
6. Director, Registration and Student Records
7. Manager, User Support Services

Timeframe: Plan for assessment and course placement completed by January, 1987.

Plan implemented July, 1987

Benefits: Students will be challenged in the classroom at a level commensurate with their academic abilities.

Instructors will be teaching students of more comparable academic skills.

Accurate and consistent placement will result in significantly fewer course transfers, drop/adds, academic petitions and other adjustments to students' schedules.

Assessment will provide identification of high risk students and their specific needs because it will include counseling interventions necessary to facilitate retention and success.

Phase I: Pre-Enrollment

Phase II: Campus Entry

PHASE III: ENROLLMENT

Phase IV: Post-Enrollment

The next seven recommendations fall under

PHASE III: ENROLLMENT

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 1

College services available to day students should be available to evening students as well.

Responsibility For Action: All student services departments and division offices should remain open during evening hours. Offices should staff at least one professional person and a clerical or student worker.

Each division/department should determine staffing and hours of operation to best accommodate student needs.

Cashier's office should be open in the evening when registration and fee payment activities are occurring.

Timeframe: Begin winter quarter, 1987.

Benefits: Evening students, who make up a large percent of the student body, will be better served, their needs met, and their likelihood to succeed enhanced.

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 2

College personnel should meet students at classrooms assigned to courses that have been cancelled.

This should occur at the first scheduled class meeting of courses cancelled within three working days of the beginning of the quarter.

Responsibility For Action: Each department should arrange their own approach to covering cancelled classes. It is preferred that a faculty member or counselor meet with students. Their role will be to give direction and advisement for registration changes.

Timeframe: Begin winter quarter, 1987

Benefits: An increased number of students affected by cancelled classes will re-register for other courses or other sections of the same course.

Confusion and anger that students may feel as a result of cancelled classes will be avoided.

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 3

Students who do not attend class and who have not officially withdrawn from class should be contacted.

Responsibility For Action: Instructors should be encouraged to call students in their own classes. It is suggested that calls be made only to students who began attending class then suddenly stopped attending.

Each department should determine the logistics of accomplishing this objective. Counselors in Counseling and Student Development are available to assist faculty in handling special cases or students needing additional help.

Students' phone numbers should be listed on class rosters sent to instructors.

Timeframe: Calls begin winter quarter, 1987

Benefits: Students will be informed of their options to withdraw or possibly return to class. This will significantly reduce the number of "F" grades given for non-attendance and catch students who are mistakenly attending a wrong section. Academic petitions will be reduced.

Students will feel more like the College cares about them as individuals.

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 4

Students placed on academic probation must meet with an academic counselor before they can register for the next quarter.

Responsibility For Action:

Computer Services must generate lists of probation students by major and provide them to every division.

Publications such as college bulletin, student handbook and quarterly schedule of classes should be revised to clearly state this policy.

Division deans and counselors should devise an approach to handling students on probation including contact methods, intervention strategies and tracking academic progress.

Timeframe:

Information in publications should be added the next time publications are revised.

Requirement that students on probation must see a counselor before registering and the necessary computer support to facilitate this should begin with fall quarter, 1987 registration.

Benefits:

Probation students are at high-risk of dismissal and drop-out. Proactive interventions at the probationary stage will assist students in overcoming their academic problems.

The number of dismissed students will decrease.

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 5

In screening and selecting new faculty members, consideration should be given to hiring for "good teaching" competencies as well as thorough knowledge of subject matter.

Responsibility For Action:

Deans, chairpersons, and faculty members involved in screening and selecting new faculty should be aware of the characteristics that are important to be a good teacher in addition to academic expertise. A balance should be sought. Evidence of effective classroom teaching techniques, professional development endeavors, and a willingness to be student centered are examples of characteristics to look for in selection.

Support for this practice should begin at the Presidential level and be communicated downward through the Vice President for Instruction, Deans, chairpersons, and faculty. Faculty senate, Academic Council, and Instructional Council are effective forums in which this can be discussed, clarified, and supported.

Timeframe:

Efforts to clarify and gain support for this practice should continue throughout the 1986-87 academic year. It should be instituted as a regular hiring practice, across all divisions, beginning June, 1987.

Benefits:

Students will be more pleased with the "learning atmosphere" provided for them in the classroom.

Students will be more likely to remain in class and continue at the College thus impacting continuous enrollments.

The image of Sinclair as an institution that cares about its students will strengthen, thus impacting future enrollments.

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 6

Efforts to enhance service to students by part-time faculty should increase.

Responsibility For Action: The part-time faculty/mentor committee of Academic Council should continue to provide a means for part-time instructors to:

1. gain access to information about College resources, academic policies, procedures, dates, and other items of importance to students.

2. participate in professional development activities such as presentations on retention, and in-service training sessions to improve teaching effectiveness.

Timeframe:

1. Retention presentation to part-time faculty - November, 1986.

2. Part-time faculty/mentor committee initiatives on-going.

Benefits: Part-time faculty will be more helpful as resources to meet student needs.

Part-time instruction, particularly in the evening, will improve and students will be more likely to persist.

ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 7

Opportunities and incentives for faculty to strengthen good classroom teaching techniques should be provided.

Responsibility For Action:

1. In-service days for faculty should be integrated into the academic year. The Fall Conference committee should plan an in-service day during fall conference week. In-service days will focus on current or innovative teaching techniques and other topics related to student persistence and success.

2. Staff Development should continue to offer in-service opportunities that relate to the enhancement of good classroom teaching techniques. Both inter-faculty sharing and guest presenters are recommended.

3. The Retention Taskforce should provide a booklet entitled "Recipes For Retention" that contain effective classroom teaching techniques for faculty and other delectable items.

4. Academic departments should conduct meetings, minimally once per quarter, to discuss retention issues and strategies particular to the departments.

5. The College should establish incentives to motivate participation in these activities.

Timeframe:

1. In-service days established in time to implement for fall conference - September, 1987.

2. Staff Development in-service opportunities - on-going

3. "Recipes For Retention" booklet distributed - January, 1987.

4. Academic department meetings to discuss retention issues - begin winter quarter, 1987.

5. Incentives provided on a continuing basis.

Benefits:

Instructors will acquire and strengthen teaching skills to enhance student learning in the classroom.

Students will more likely persist in classes that maintain a positive learning environment.

Faculty will strengthen their role as retention agents.

On going in-service programs and departmental meetings will provide continuous information, communication, and momentum for proactive retention interventions rather than reactive ones.

Phase I: Pre-Enrollment

Phase II: Campus Entry

Phase III: Enrollment

PHASE IV: POST-ENROLLMENT

The next four recommendations fall under

PHASE IV: POST-ENROLLMENT

POST-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 1

At the end of each quarter, courses should be examined statistically to determine student success, withdrawal, and failure rates; courses with high attrition should be examined and potential trouble spots addressed.

Responsibility For Action: Institutional Research and Computer Services should provide the necessary data to accomplish this analysis.

Deans, chairpersons, and faculty should examine the data and determine effective ways of addressing areas of concern.

Emphasis should be placed on courses and learners, not individual instructors.

Timeframe: Research and computer support to be in place for course analysis - December, 1987.

Benefits: Identifying and addressing high attrition courses will increase retention and enrollment.

POST-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 2

There should be a system to allow for in-class registration of continuing students.

Responsibility For Action: The registration committee should recommend a system for in-class registration. The recommendation should be brought to Instructional Council and President's Council for review and approval.

Timeframe: Recommendations reviewed and approved - June, 1987
Implemented for winter quarter, 1988 registration

Benefits: More convenient registration for continuing students.

More registrations will take place earlier in the process thus reducing crowds during walk-in.

POST-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 3

Identify and implement strategies that will foster continuing relationships with potentially returning, withdrawing and dismissed students.

Responsibility For Action: The following areas should devise strategies to impact the re-enrollment of these students:

1. Admissions for potentially returning students.
2. Counseling and Student Development with withdrawing students.
3. Academic counselors with dismissed students.

Timeframe: Strategies ready to implement - June, 1987

Benefits: Enrollment gains will be expected.

POST-ENROLLMENT RECOMMENDATION 4

Communicate the success of completers (i.e. graduates, job placements, transfers) to prospective students.

Responsibility For Action: As the Office of Admissions reviews and revises the marketing plan, consideration should be given to incorporating this recommendation.

Timeframe: According to timeframe already set for review of marketing plan.

Benefits: Utilize effective image-makers for recruitment

The last two recommendations do not fall into any particular phase. They are important in the overall development, management, and evaluation of student retention efforts.

These recommendations pertain to:

DATA SERVICES AND RETENTION COMMITTEE

DATA SERVICES RECOMMENDATION

Data pertaining to student retention and attrition should be developed and maintained for the College.

Responsibility For Action: Institutional Research, Computer Services and other departments involved with student information should address the following data needs.

1. a method to identify retention rates and enrollment patterns for continuous, returning, potentially returning, withdrawing, and dismissed students.
2. a student opinion study to reflect current student needs and perceptions.
3. a process for the continuation of retention research and evaluation of retention interventions as proposed in this report or from other sources.

Timeframe: Immediate and on-going

Benefits: The College will be able to differentiate and predict the retention of students according to their enrollment behaviors and adjust policies, procedures, programs, services, etc. to increase retention.

Continuous retention data will be available and used to determine future changes.

Retention data will allow for the evaluation of retention activities implemented by the College.

Information will be useful in external reporting for accreditation, Board of Regents, grant proposals, etc.

RETENTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

An ad hoc retention committee or taskforce should exist to evaluate, advise, and suggest revisions with respect to the implementation of a campus-wide retention plan.

The currently existing Retention Taskforce should continue in this new role.

Responsibility For Action: The President should appoint the Taskforce as such.

Timeframe: Immediate

Benefits: The Taskforce will facilitate successful implementation of the plan.

APPENDIX A

Annotated Bibliography

This is an annotated bibliography of published retention strategies that have been implemented at community and technical colleges across the nation. Each annotation gives the source of the publication and a brief description of the strategy implemented.

The strategies were broken down into five major categories that seem to reflect central themes of retention efforts:

1. Communication among various facets of the college
2. Counseling, tutoring, advisement
3. Affective atmosphere of the college
4. Instructional procedures carried out by faculty
5. Other - miscellaneous

I. Communication among various facets of the college:

1. Recruitment and retention program outlines. (1978). Schneckville, PA: Lehigh County Community College. Student Personnel Services.

   Create ongoing Retention Committee with subcommittee in each division including a department chair, academic counselor, interested faculty and students.

2. Strategies for student success, an instructional perspective. (1981). Chicago, ILL: Tuton Community College, Retention Committee, Academic Advisory Council.

   Create ongoing Retention Committee with subcommittee in each division including a department chair, academic counselor, interested faculty and students.

3. Recommendations of the retention taskforce. Taylor, P. (1983). SC: Sumter Area Technical College.

   Regular meetings among academic advisors/counselors/career center staff to exchange information and ideas.

4. Retention in higher education. Wilder, J. (1983). Psychology, 20 (2), 4-9.

   Include all elements (academic, student, and business affairs) in retention studies and strategies. Encourage, increase dialogue between departments.

II. Counseling, tutoring, advisement:

1. An unusual retention strategy. (1983, March 14). Administrator, 2.

   Establish telephone campain for non-preregistered students and no-shows (non-matriculated students.) Professional counselors or faculty hired part-time to call; cost per student - $1.30.

2. Darkenwald, G. (1981). Retaining adult students (Report No. CE 029 785). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearninghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 205 773)

   Special retention efforts for adult students - take steps to assess and address real needs and create a supportive learning environment. Especially important to encourage faculty to adjust teaching styles to learning styles of adult students.

3. Davis, P., Horvath, R., and McKay, J. (1983). Student retention: Case studies of community college programs that work. Proceedings from AACJC Convention, St. Louis.

Faculty members call students whose courses have been cancelled or closed and assist them with rescheduling.

4. Donnangelo, F.P., and Santa Rita, E.D. (1982). The effects of two college orientation courses upon the academic performance and retention of entering freshmen (Report No. JC 830 390).

   Offer and/or require an orientation course.

5. Friedlander, J. (1982). Innovative approaches to delivering academic assistance to students. (Report No. JC 820 436). Los Angeles, CA: Center for the Study of Community Colleges. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 220 172)

   Computerized advising -

   a. send transcripe each quarter with completed courses checked off, problems flagged

   b. transfer programs in the system

   c. different catalogs in the system

6. Horvath, R. (1980). The recruitment, retention, and attrition project at Jefferson Community College. Innovation abstracts, 2, (No. 6).

   Overhaul the advising system to better assist undeclared students. Also, faculty volunteers needed to establish contacts with local high schools on discipline basis.

7. Roueche, J.E. (1978, December/January). Let's get serious about the high risk student. Community and Junior College Journal, 28-31.

   Thorough assessment, advising with attention to developmental courses and prerequisites.

8. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p.8).

   Prepare student advising manuals for each major. Prepare mentoring handbooks for academic advisors.

9. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 19).

Academic Exploration program for all undeclared students. Faculty and staff from all segments of the institution advise. Builds strong faculty/student relationships.

10. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 26).

    Close articulation agreements set up with transfer colleges. (We should have transfer agreements with Wright State, University of Dayton and Ohio State for most programs. Most in our catalog are outdated or misleading.)

11. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 32).

    "One More Try" for dismissed students. Attend group meetings once a week, sign contract. Meetings include goal-setting, time-management, challenging of cop-outs. Similar program is voluntary for probation students.

12. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 39).

    Two-day workshop for high risk students prior to fall term. Weekly meetings with advisor.

13. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 70).

    College and career planning workshops in summer.

14. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 85).

    Exit interview - two purpose: to point out other alternatives to withdrawal and serve as device to evaluate retention program.

15. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 145)

    Send newsletter to students in each program describing the advantages of completing the program.

III. Affective atmosphere of college:

1. Clagett, C. (1982). Community College Retention Research (Report No. JC 820 530). Fargo, MD: Prince George's Community College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 225 604)

   Orientation for all full and part-time classified employees to help make campus more "student-friendly".

2. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 1).

   Housing office for non-commuters.

3. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 79).

   Relaxation, stress management programs.

4. The Act National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 93).

   Social organization for older students.

IV. Instruction procedures carried out by faculty

1. Barshis, D., Easton, J., and Ginsberg, R. (1983-84, December/January). Chicago colleges identify effective teachers. Community and Junior College Journal, pp. 27-31.

   Provide staff development to help faculty develop characteristics of mastery teachers:

   1. organized
   2. student-oriented (capable of providing good advisement)
   3. encourage student class participation
   4. provide regular feedback

2. Recommendations from the 1978-79 retention committee. Tri-County Technical College, Murphy, NC.

   All introductory technical, trade, business and human services courses include a "Learning About Your Career" unit conducted in the Career Center.

3. The ACT National Center for Educational Conferences. (1979). Reducing the dropout rate. Selected retention programs/activities taken from the survey, "What works in student retention." (p. 118).

   All faculty give course syllabi to students at beginning of term. Syllabi state course objectives, means of evaluation.

4. Weber, J. (1985, September 3). Retention brief: The FUD desk". AACJC Letter, (Suppl. 157).

   Phone calls from faculty to absent students. Learning students' names. Moving students from one level to another in beginning English and math courses anytime during term.

V. Other - don't fit into any of the first four categories:

1. Clagett, C. (1982). Community college retention research (Report No. JC 820 530). Fargo, MD: Prince George's Community College. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed 225 604)

   Study "high risk" courses for factors leading to high attrition.

2. Conelley, W. (1982). Dropout intervention services. Charlotte NC: Central Piedmont Community College.

   Establish program for community members without a high school diploma.

3. Suggestions from commuter students workshop. Dayton OH: Sinclair Community College.

   Suggestions from Commuter Students Workshop -

   a. improve signage, leading to greater ease of getting around campus

   b. all offices and food service facilities open until at least 7:00 p.m.

   c. rewrite catalog for readability, avoidance of jargon and redefinition of program requirements

   d. try offering 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. classes.

APPENDIX B

Results of Withdrawal Pilot Study Questionnaire--Spring, 1986

Total number of students responding: 282

1. What is your major?

BUSINESS: 71 (25%)
- Gen. Business Man.: 21
- Secretarial: 7
- Data Processing/EDP: 12
- Marketing: 5
- Accounting: 2
- Logistics: 1
- Bus. Administration: 16
- Aviation Adm: 2
- Purchasing: 1
- Real Estate: 1
- Financial Mgt.: 1
- Procurement/Mat'ls Mgt: 2

ALLIED HEALTH: 28 (11%)
- Nursing: 12
- Mental Health Tech.: 3
- Radiology: 4
- Dietician Tech.: 1
- General: 2
- Dental Hygiene: 2
- Resp. Therapy: 4

EXTENDED LEARNING: 11 (4%)
- Corrections: 1
- Early Childhood Ed.: 3
- Law Enforcement: 4
- Handicapped Serv.: 1
- Communications: 2

ENGINEERING: 35 (12%)
- Mechanical Engr.: 12
- Computer Science: 6
- Electronic Engr.: 8
- Packaging: 1
- Drafting/Design: 2
- Civil Engr: 1
- Tool & Die: 1
- Automotive: 2
- Industrial Engr.: 1
- Heating & Air.: 1

FINE ARTS: 15 (5%)
- Art: 5
- Graphic Arts: 2
- Commerical Arts: 3
- Theatre: 3
- Music: 2

LIBERAL ARTS: 43 (15%)
- Liberal Arts/Gen: 14
- Undecided: 29

NO MAJOR LISTED: 79 (28%)

2. How many credit-hours were you taking?

1 - 6: 153 (63%)
7 - 11: 31 (13%)
12 or more: 57 (24%)

Did not answer: 41

3. How many quarters have you attended Sinclair, including this one?

1 quarter: 39 (17%)
2 quarters: 33 (14%)
3 quarters: 35 (15%)
4 quarters: 27 (12%)
5 quarters: 19 (8%)
6 quarters (or more): 81 (34%)

Did not answer: 48

4. What time of day were most of your classes?

Day: 139 (57%)
Evening: 95 (39%)
TV Sinclair: 1 (.4%)
Weekend: 8 (3%)

Did not answer: 39

5. Indicate reasons for withdrawing.

Finances: 8 (3%)	Work Obligations: 106 (43%)
Veterans Benefits: 1 (.4%)	Quality/method classroom instruction: 18 (7%)
Personal Illness: 39 (16%)	Grades: 20 (8%)
Family Obligations: 53 (21%)	
Transportation: 4 (2%)	

Did not answer: 33

6. Have you taken the Asset Placement tests?

yes: 115 (50%)
no: 116 (45%)

Did not answer: 51

7. Do you plan to attend Sinclair in the future?

yes: 211 (37%) maybe: 8 (3%)
no: 23 (10%)

Did not answer: 40

8. When?

Next quarter (summer): 76 (39%)	Next year: 6 (3%)
Fall, 1986: 78 (40%)	Uncertain when: 36 (18%)

Did not answer: 15

9. Is there anything Sinclair could have done?

yes: 17 (10%)
No: 173 (91%)

Did not answer: 92

10. Have you talked with an advisor/counselor?

yes: 49 (21%)
no: 185 (79%)

Did not answer: 48

11. Would you like someone to contact you?

yes: 42 (19%)
no: 177 (81%)

Did not answer: 63

APPENDIX C

College Wide Retention Program, May 8 and 9, 1986

The following is a summary of the major points expressed during each focus group and the recommendations that Randi Levitz provided for Sinclair to consider:

President's and Dean's Councils

1. A centralized computer tracking system for full- and part-time students to flag for academic problems and graduation requirements is needed.

2. Academic advising plan must cover the large number of students who don't get advising but need it.

3. Must try to retain part-time students who are also working.

4. If a student can identify with just one person on campus it doubles their chances of retention.

5. Address alternatives to refund policy.

6. Midway into their first quarter, students should be asked about plans for next quarter and if they need help.

7. Retention is a college-wide responsibility.

Directors and Admissions

1. Advising should be more consistent and timely.

2. Cancelled classes are a problem that should be addressed.

3. New students should take an orientation course and receive credit for it.

4. We should always put ourselves in the students' place when making decisions - think like students think.

Chairpersons

1. Use students to recruit other students - they are a powerful force.

2. Establish a minority recruitment program.

3. Sinclair has low numbers of minority faculty and administrators.

4. Students should be tested during junior year in high school for competencies in English, math, and reading.

5. Instructors should teach students how to learn - to motivate them to learn.

6. Transferring into different levels of math and English should be more flexible.

7. Feeling that many students perceive Sinclair as inferior to four-year colleges - must alter this perception. Sinclair is mostly promoted and recognized as "technical."

8. Reduce the negatives of registration.

Support Staff

1. Lack of communication provided to support staff - not knowing about changes, etc., results in giving students wrong information.

2. The troubles of registration need to be addressed.

3. Long lines in bookstore turn students off.

4. Support staff are the front porch of the college - can be a student's first and only contact with the college.

5. Academic counselors are not all consistent in the information given to students - two counselors may tell the same student two different things.

6. Employees who talk to students on phone may not listen to student's needs and transfer to wrong office.

7. A centralized information center for students should be established.

Students

1. Most common perception of Sinclair is low tuition and accessibility.

2. There are good and bad instructors.

3. Some instructors are not caring - seem to do it for the money.

4. Some engineering instructors are hard to understand.

5. Even if you mail-in registration, you still often must come back and wait in line.

6. Financial Aid staff often lacks knowledge and accessibility to help students.

7. The small class size is good.

8. General feeling is that students can go to a faculty member for help.

9. Not enough academic counselors to serve students adequately.

Faculty

1. Administration should stress quality, not numbers (enrollment) to increase retention.

2. Make placement testing and advising mandatory.

3. Enforce prerequisites, especially if developmental work is needed.

4. College personnel (administrators, support staff, faculty, counselors) must treat students in a caring, empathic manner.

5. The way students are treated during registration and advising are major causes of retention and attrition.

6. Mandatory orientation program for new students emphasizing study skills; mandatory course in "College Survival Skills."

7. Creation of an Ombudsman to help students feel better about Sinclair.

8. Need better pay for part-time faculty; also to improve evaluation of part-time instructors and facilities available to them.

9. Improve advising and simplify registration procedures.

10. Instructors should let students get to know another student in class on the first day.

Developmental Studies Faculty

1. Take away students' expectations of completing a program in one or two years. This causes more resistance and lowers self-esteem if DEV is needed.

2. Reality counseling should be available to students whose skills and abilities do not coincide with goals - explore alternatives.

3. Faculty who advise should not encourage students to bypass DEV classes if needed.

4. Placement testing and cut-off scores should be reviewed, particularly in reading.

Academic and Student Services Counselors

1. Computer system cannot provide the students data needed for counselors to help students.

2. Most counselors see very few students more than once or twice.

3. Divisions are different from each other in terms of the nature of counseling/advising provided.

4. Most advising is self-advising.

5. Each division is developing an advising plan that will include a role for faculty.

6. Don't have adequate space, particularly for ASSET.

7. Counselors must create support for getting what is needed to help students.

At the wrap-up session with Vice Presidents, Deans, and the Retention Taskforce, Randi Levitz made the following recommendations:

1. Academic skills assessment and course placement should be mandatory for all new degree seeking students.

2. Course prerequisites should be enforced.

3. There should be better communication to support staff. Quarterly update sessions and "how to" manuals should be instituted.

4. A centralized information center in a convenient, visible location should be established - this is a place where students can go for information, answer questions, receive literature, etc.

5a. Academic advising must be timely and consistent. Intake advising and advising students with developmental or academic problems should be done by academic advisors and counselors. More intrusive advising.

5b. Faculty advising should involve program mentoring (scheduling, meeting program requirements, career opportunities, etc.). Faculty advisors should be volunteers and receive some type of reward.

6. A centralized computer system to flag problem students and to provide counselors and faculty with student information should exist. This will facilitate proactive and instrusive student assistance.

7. A one credit orientation course should be mandatory for all full-time students emphasizing study skills, college resources, and life management.

8. Eliminate advertising two-year or one-year programs. Most students take longer anyway. This leads to false expectations and can be misleading. Developmental coursework should be included in all programs so that students are prepared up front if they need it.

9. Instructors should be hired based on "good teacher" themes; caring, empathy, motivating, etc. Teachers must communicate care and concern to students.

10. Peer advising and peer buddies should be developed. Students who can identify with other students are more likely to be retained.

11. Use students to recruit other students; student to student is the most powerful recruiting agent. Student success testimonials should be written on brochures.

12. Student study and congregating areas should be available.

13. A current student survey should be conducted.

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